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May 20th, 12:30 PM

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Duenas OF, O'Dell KK, Patterson D, Kandadai P, Saini J, Flynn MK. (2014). Patient-focused Websites Related to Stress Urinary Incontinence and Pelvic Organ Prolapse: a DISCERN Quality Analysis. UMass Center for Clinical and Translational Science Research Retreat. Retrieved from https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cts_retreat/2014/posters/40

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Title: Patient-focused websites related to stress urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse: a DISCERN quality analysis

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Objective: To evaluate the quality of information presented on English-language websites regarding treatment options for POP and SUI using a validated instrument.

Methods: Utilizing the International Urogynecology Association list of continence societies worldwide, faculty nomination and a complementary Google search using the terms "professional organizations stress urinary incontinence / pelvic organ prolapse" English-language, patient-focused websites related to POP and SUI were identified.

The websites were evaluated by faculty at an academic medical center, including 4 faculty members of the urogynecology division, 2 urogynecology fellows, 3 urologists, and 1 obstetrician gynecologist. The websites were independently evaluated using the validated DISCERN instrument assessing the reliability and quality of consumer health information.

Results: From the IUGA continence societies worldwide list, 47 websites were identified. Five provided patient information in English. Eight additional websites were identified from the Google search or provider nomination. One website provided information only for POP (rectocele), 5 for SUI, and 7 for both. The lowest mean total score for any website was 38.7 and the highest mean total score was 61.5 across all the websites. There were no statistically significant differences in the website mean total scores (p value <0.40 for POP and 0.14 for SUI). For websites covering both topics, POP scores were generally higher than SUI scores, but not statistically significantly different (p value <3.75). The overall quality item scores were also not significantly different (SUI: $p < 0.923$; POP: $p < 0.813$).

Missing information most commonly included lack of clear objectives, sources, and information related to the expected outcome of no intervention.

Conclusions: Available English-language professional websites written to inform patients about management choices for SUI and POP miss key components of quality patient information.

Table1. DISCERN scores for SUI and POP SUI

DISCERN scores for SUI					
Website	Total mean score	Standard deviation	Min	Max	Mean overall quality item score
ACOG ^a	49.85	11.4	36	72	2.87
AAFP ^b	43.8.	10.22	32	59	1.85
APTA ^c	44	12.21	29	59	2
AUA ^d	60.83	12.12	47	75	3.57
AUGS ^e	53.62	13.33	35	68	2.88
CF ^f	43.4	13.04	29	61	2
FDA ^g	38.75	7.22	28	43	2
ICS ^h	45	16.44	16	73	2.55
IUGA ⁱ	55.28	11.26	40	70	3.62
NAFC ^j	61.5	16.39	40	78	4.42
NIA ^k	44.66	8.71	32	53	2.42
NIH ^l	47.85	17.32	28	78	2.125
All combined websites for SUI	49.48	13.85	16	78	2.69
DISCERN scores for POP					
ACOG ^b	53.12	13.96	38	72	3.25
ASCR ^m	55	8.33	40	64	3.75
AUA ^d	50.57	14.44	34	71	3.06
AUGS ^e	54.6	16.19	35	80	3.33
FDA ^g	41	4.69	36	47	2.4
ICS ^h	53	13.68	34	71	2.62
IUGA ⁱ	55.83	6.82	50	66	3.57
NIH ^l	46.8	11.81	31	64	2.3
All combined websites for POP	51.85	11.98	31	80	3.03

^aAmerican Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists^bAmerican Academy of Family Physicians^cAmerican Physical Therapy Association^d American Urological Association^e American Urogynecologic Society^fContinence Foundation^g Federal Drug Administration^h International Continence Societyⁱ International Urogynecological Association

^j National Association For Continence

^k National Institutes of Aging

^l National Institutes of Health

^m American society of colorectal surgeons